

*Bipartisan Legislation Would Help Families Save on Health Care and Child Care Expenses*

**Washington, D.C.** – At a press conference today, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) announced their new legislation that would provide flexible spending accounts for service members – an important benefit that will help military families save on health care and child care expenses.

Flexible spending accounts would result in significant savings for military families by allowing service members to set aside a portion of their income before taxes to cover out-of-pocket child care and health care expenses such as co-pays, dental care and eye glasses. This benefit is currently available to civilian employees at the Department of Defense, but not to uniformed service members.

The House bill will be co-sponsored by Representatives Virginia Foxx (NC-5) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-5).

**“This is a simple matter of fairness,”** said Rep. Sanchez. **“Flexible spending accounts will help our military families save on healthcare and child expenses like other federal employees. Our troops serve this nation with honor and distinction, and they deserve the best benefits we can possibly offer.”**

Senator Boxer said, **“As co-chair of the Military Family Caucus, I am so proud to be introducing this bipartisan legislation that will help our military families save money on essential health care and child care expenses. Providing flexible spending accounts to our service members who have sacrificed so much is simply the right thing to do. I look forward to working with my colleagues to see that this bill becomes law.”**

**“America’s military men and women and their families make great sacrifices on behalf of**

**our nation, and they deserve the best services we can offer them,” Senator Burr said. “Flexible spending accounts would be an important tool in empowering our service members and their families to stretch their health care dollars even further and better meet their individual health care needs, and there is no reason military personnel shouldn’t have the same access to benefits as their civilian counterparts.”**

**“It’s about time we gave our military men and women the same sort of medical spending accounts that many of their civilian counterparts enjoy,” Rep. Foxx said. “This is the least we can do considering the sacrifices they make for our country each day.”**

Boxer and Sanchez were joined by military service organizations supportive of the legislation including the Military Officers Association of America, the National Military Family Association, Blue Star Families, The American Legion, the Association of the United States Navy and the Association of the United States Army.

**“It makes no sense that currently serving military people are the only large group of employees in America who are denied access to flexible spending accounts to help reduce the cost of out-of-pocket health and dependent care expenses,”** said VADM Norb Ryan, Jr (USN-Ret), President of the Military Officers Association of America.

**“We’re grateful for Senators Boxer’s and Burr’s and Rep. Sanchez’s initiative and leadership in trying to rectify that inequity.”**

**“Military families are asking for the same financial tools that their civilian counterparts have, to help them pay for child care or braces or eyeglasses for their children,”** said Kathleen B. Moakler, Government Relations Director for the National Military Family Association.

□ **“We thank Senator Boxer, Senator Burr and Representative Sanchez for their continuing support through this legislation.”**

**“Civilians have enjoyed the FSA perks for a while now,”** said Pamela Stokes Eggleston, Development Director at Blue Star Families.

□ **“It is sound business to ensure that our service members and their families have the same opportunity. It’s also the right thing to do.”**

**“The American Legion is proud to join Senator Boxer, Congresswoman Sanchez, and the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress in introducing this legislation,”** said Tim Tetz, Director of the American Legion’s Legislative Action Center. **“The burdens of serving our nation are shouldered by not only the service member but their families. Any programs or benefits such as medical savings accounts are not only deserved, but worthwhile to enhance our support of those serving. Furthermore, to offer a service member the same benefit many of us enjoy is a small investment in the morale and welfare of our military and safety and security of our nation.”**

**“AUSN thanks Senator Boxer and Representative Sanchez for the introduction of this legislation,”** said Captain Ike Puzon (USN-Ret), AUSN Director of Government Relations. **“It is essential that we include Active Duty and Reserve Component members in this health cost saving benefit. Participation in a FSA benefit would help military families defray rising health care, and help our service members meet these difficult economic conditions.”**

AUSA President Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, USA. Ret. said, **“AUSA fully supports this legislation. Military members and their families should have the same options available to them as others.”**